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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000290

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: (S) DRUGS, BOOZE AND WOMEN - TOTAL DISORDER AT  
CAMP ALPHA YAYA

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. A new civilian contact claiming to have been living in Camp Alpha for the past eight years shares some interesting perspectives on the mutiny and life among the mutineers. He paints a depressing picture of young, undisciplined soldiers that bully the local population while smoking marijuana and getting drunk. He describes splits between the mutineers and the self-identified leader of the mutiny, Claude Pivi (aka Coplan), suggesting that we may not have yet seen the end of unrest at Camp Alpha Yaya. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) On June 12, Poloff met with Mr. Yaya Diallo, a young marketing professor and frequent visitor to the Embassy's information resource center. Diallo has lived at Camp Alpha Yaya, the heart of the ongoing mutiny, for the last eight years with his older brother who is a soldier. He claims to have many friends among the younger soldiers. Diallo spoke animatedly for more than an hour as he shared insights into life inside the walls of the camp, interspersing his comments with what seemed to be bemused laughter at the absurdity of events. He was eager to talk, but then at the end, asked that his comments be closely guarded as he did not want to get himself into trouble.

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COMPLETE DISORDER  
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¶3. (S) Diallo said that there is complete disorder at Camp Alpha Yaya. He pointed out that most of the mutineers have very little professional training, many with six months or less, and that they lack discipline. According to Diallo, soldiers spend their time and money on marijuana, beer, and women. He noted that the camp is full of uniformed drug dealers, many of whom were already drug dealers when they were recruited into the military. Diallo said that the initial 1 million GnF payment made to the soldiers on May 30 was spent within a few days, mostly on vices, with a few soldiers buying motorbikes or paying down debt.

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BULLIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS  
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¶4. (S) With respect to the local civilian community, Diallo said that everyone is scared of the soldiers and tired of being bullied. Even before the mutiny, Diallo said that soldiers would frequently threaten shopkeepers at the small boutiques just outside the camps, demanding goods for free or reduced prices. He said that at the first sign of unrest in the camp, all of the shopkeepers close their doors and take their products home in order to avoid theft and vandalism.

¶5. (S) Diallo said he witnessed one soldier threatening a

shopkeeper a few weeks ago after the soldier asked to buy 500 GnF (\$.10) worth of cigarettes on credit. When the shopkeeper refused, the soldier reportedly offered to let him hold his national identification card as collateral. The shopkeeper agreed, but after handing over the cigarettes, the soldier would not give him the identification card. The shopkeeper protested and the soldier reportedly threatened to kill him at the next opportunity (such as during civil unrest). According to Diallo, the day before the mutiny started, someone warned the shopkeeper who quickly took all of his merchandise home and closed down shop. The same soldier reportedly came back to the boutique during the mutiny, waving his gun, and demanding to know where the shopkeeper was so he could repay his debt.

16. (S) During the height of the mutiny, Diallo said that the soldiers were threatening civilians, robbing them, and otherwise terrorizing them. He said that the soldiers would throw smoke grenades, which are meant to be defensive devices. They still pack a small explosion when they are detonated, and Diallo said a number of civilians were wounded from such explosions.

17. (S) Turning to the mutineers, Diallo said that many of them are the same soldiers who fired into crowds of civilians during the civil unrest of early 2007. He said that the soldiers who had been detained on Kassa Island for alleged human rights abuses were released early in the mutiny, and immediately joined the mutineers at Camp Alpha Yaya. "They were armed to the teeth the very same day they came back," he said. Diallo said he also saw at least one armed man in complete uniform who was participating in the mutiny, but was

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not actually a soldier. When asked how he could tell the difference, he said that during "situations like this," everyone knows a secret password so you can identify who is on your side. According to Diallo, the uniformed man did not know the password and was therefore not a legitimate member of the military.

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PROBLEMS WITH COPLAN  
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18. (S) Diallo also had much to say about the leader of the mutiny, Claude Pivi (aka Coplan). He said that President Conte had given Coplan two brand new pick-up trucks as well as 50 million GnF (\$11,100) in order to "calm him down." When he realized that Coplan would not be able to afford fuel for his new vehicles, the president also reportedly gave him fuel coupons. Diallo said the mutineers have interpreted Conte's buy off as a sign that the president is scared and weak. He added that some of the soldiers think they should take up leadership roles in the mutiny so that they can similarly benefit.

19. (S) According to Diallo, the mutineers are divided in their support of Coplan, although they supported him initially. Diallo said that most of the mutineers are insisting on the dismissal of the old guard leadership represented by the senior ranking military officials. When Coplan backed down on that demand, Diallo said that he lost significant support, which deteriorated further when Coplan flaunted his new-found wealth. Diallo added that Coplan has made it very clear that he considers the president like a father, and that many of the mutineers do not share this view. Furthermore, Coplan reportedly suggested that General Sampil be appointed as the new minister of defense, which many of the young mutineers object to because Sampil still represents the old guard.

110. (S) Confirming various reports of Coplan's animist practices, Diallo said that Coplan frequently wears gris-gris (talismans). Diallo described a man who sees himself as invincible, omnipotent. He cited an example from when the

mutineers faced off with presidential loyalists at the Castro Bridge. According to Diallo, Coplan told the rest of the mutineers to stay in their vehicles, and that he alone would get out to discuss matters with the loyalists because "bullets could not harm him." Diallo said that another of his friends had recently seen Coplan driving in the city in his brand new pick-up truck, going the wrong way against traffic, waving people out of the way.

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LOOKING TO FRIDAY  
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¶11. (S) When asked about the current state of affairs at the camp and how the situation will develop in the coming days, Diallo said that he has been hearing rumors that "things will start up again tomorrow." He added that since Tuesday, the mutineers have been grumbling and talking about "shooting again" on Friday (June 13). According to Diallo, the mutineers are well aware of the teachers' unions' threat to strike next week and are thinking that they need to make their move before the teachers do so that the government does not pay the mutineers' money to the teachers. Diallo said that if the president accepts to dismiss all the generals, he may be able to calm the situation.

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THE SPIES AMONG US  
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¶12. (S) Diallo added that anyone coming to Camp Alpha Yaya from Camp Samory Toure and/or the Ministry of Defense are viewed with extreme suspicion. "They are all considered spies," he told Poloff. Diallo said that when General Camara came to meet with Coplan on June 6, Camara came with five trucks loaded with army rangers "armed to the teeth," because he was worried about his personal safety.

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COMMENT  
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¶13. (S) This is the Embassy's first interaction with Diallo as a contact. He came across as well educated and articulate, and claims to be well plugged in to what is happening within Camp Alpha Yaya. If his observations are

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correct, we could be looking at undisciplined troops under the influence of alcohol and drugs who believe that they can essentially get whatever they want because the state is weak.

There may also be a split between Coplan and the mutineers, which could spark the emergence of another figurehead for the mutiny. From military sources, we are still hearing that things are calm and that a resolution is expected on June 13.

END COMMENT.  
CARTER